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ABSTRACT

The work of the 1984-1987 California Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education (which spelled out how the function of each of its three public higher education segments would be differentiated, governed, and coordinated) is reviewed with focus on its effectiveness. Members of the Commission were asked to determine their perceptions of its effectiveness in meeting 10 characteristics: choice of commission members; clarity of state mandate; number of meetings held to allow commissioners to fully understand the issues and solutions; importance of strong leadership by the commission's chair; choice of commission staff; ability to seek public opinion; content of the commission's report; commission advocacy of the report; timeliness of commission final report; and usefulness of its recommendations to the state. A detailed questionnaire was given to 73 key representatives from six participant groups (commissioners, commission executive staff, chief executive officers advisory group, segmental advisory group, faculty advisory group, and legislative representatives). Results include the following: respondents were less satisfied with certain elements in the external environment that affected the process of the review (e.g. work of the legislative Joint Committee); and all the characteristics except timeliness of the commission's final report were found to be useful in judging commission effectiveness. A list of recommendations regarding the reviewing process is provided. Tables are included. Contains 15 references. (SM)

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Reviewing the California Master Plan for Higher Education: Process, Politics, and Outcomes

By:

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Fourteenth Annual Meeting
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REVIEWING THE CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: PROCESS, POLITICS, AND OUTCOMES

Wendelyn K. Hugstad, Ph. D.

In 1959, the State of California established a Master Plan for the development, expansion, and integration of its higher education facilities. The plan spelled out how the function of each of its three public higher education segments would be differentiated, how they would be governed, and how they would be coordinated. These recommendations were enacted into law in the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960. At the time, comprehensive planning for higher education was a relatively new concept and, as a result, the California Master Plan became the model for comprehensive higher education planning in the United States and among countries with leading higher education institutions throughout the world.

When the late Glenn Dumke, Chancellor Emeritus of the California State University system was asked how the original California Master Plan for Higher Education was intended to benefit the State of California he replied:

> The answer was simple: efficiency and economy through specialization by segment. The University of California should be a top-notch graduate and research institution and should only have sufficient undergraduate offerings to support a strong graduate program. The [California State University] should be the top-notch undergraduate and master's level institution, and should not build a graduate empire. The [California Community Colleges] should remain two-year institutions for a dual purpose to send qualified students to four-year institutions for advanced work, and to serve as our version of the European technical institute by offering two-year vocational programs. 1

This differentiation of function as enacted into California law in the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960 has never been appreciably altered since. Three reviews of the California Master Plan ocurring in the mid 1960s and early 1970s focused on issues regarding a change in the function, governance, and coordination of the three public higher education segments also addressed by the Donahoe Higher Education Act. The result was a change in the governance structure of the California Community Colleges and a change in the coordination body representing the three higher education segments. The most recent review completed by the 1984-1987 Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education again focused on issues regarding function, governance, and

coordination. The Commission's recommendations focused on clarifying the differentiation of function for each of the three public higher education segments and reaffirming the use of their existing governance and coordination bodies. In addition, the Commission made recommendations regarding the unity, equity, quality, and efficiency of the three public higher education systems.

The purpose of this study was to review the work of the 1984-1987 California Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education.The study sought to answer the question, "How effective was the work of the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education? The findings and resulting recommendations were intended to be helpful to higher education and state officials wishing to know the potential worth and limits of a blue ribbon commission's approach to policy development in postsecondary education.

In an ASHE-ERIC publication (1986) entitled "Blue Ribbon Commissions and Higher Education", Johnson and Marcus promoted the use of a blue ribbon commission in recommending policy for postsecondary education. They believed such a commission could be an asset by providing "a fresh view and a reality check", and also to act as an "instrument through which bold policy initiatives [could be] given a legitimate place on the agenda".

The California Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education met the characteristics of a blue ribbon commission described by Johnson (1982, 29) in her earlier research. The California Commission: 1) had a pre-determined life span; 2) was established by the state legislature; 3) included individuals from a variety of backgrounds; 4) was provided with staff and funds; and 5) was charged to investigate and/or to recommend changes in postsecondary education structure, functions, origins, or processes.

Glenny 's (1971,13) referral to effectiveness as "the degree to which the program succeeds in doing what was intended"was helpful. He stated, "[effectiveness] becomes a very vague concept without knowing what was intended, without understanding purpose." Johnson and Marcus (1986,72) outlined eight characteristics of an effective blue ribbon commission which gave a sense of purpose to: 1) the choice of commission members; 2) the charge to the commission; 3) the number of meetings held to allow commissioners to fully understand the issues and potential solutions; 4) the importance of strong leadership by the commission's chair; 5) the choice of commission staff; 6) the commission's ability

to seek public opinion; 7) the content of the commission's report; and 8) commission advocacy of the report.

The study, for the first time, requested members of the California Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education to determine their perceptions of the Commission's effectiveness in meeting the eight characteristics. This was the first method used to determine the effectiveness of the Commission's work. The second method used to determine effectiveness was to document whether perceptions regarding questions pertaining to the Commission and its work as a whole, were positive. (i.e.,use of the Commission, the work of the Commissioners and Executive Staff, factors which played a role in the external environment, the immediate outcome of the Commission's recommendations, and their subsequent effect on postsecondary education). Two additional criteria involved assessing whether key Commission recommendations were found to address the objectives of the California State Legislative mandate and whether an immediate and recognizable change in the State's higher education structure, functions, or processes was produced as an outcome. The methodology and results of the first two criteria will be discussed in the body of this paper because they reflect the perceptions of the respondents. The latter two criteria more accurately reflect the perceptions of the researcher based on analysis of the Commission's final report and interviews with the Commission Executive Director and Chair.

METHODOLOGY

First, a structured, detailed questionnaire was distributed to seventy-three key representatives drawn from six key participant groups: 1) Commissioners; 2) Commission Executive Staff; 3) Chief Executive Officers Advisory Group (made up of Presidents and Chancellors from the three public higher education segments, and the independent colleges and universities segment); 4) Segmental Advisory Group (made up of representatives from the three public higher education segments and the independent colleges and universities segment); 5) Faculty Advisory Group (made up of faculty representatives from the three public higher education segments and the independent colleges and universities segment; and 6) Legislative representatives (made up of members and staff of the legislative Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education). Every member of the six key participant groups was surveyed with the exception of two Commission Staff members who were difficult to locate.

Second, seventeen interviews were conducted with key representatives from the Commission, the Commission Executive Staff, the C.E.O. and Faculty Advisory Groups, and the State Legislature.

A set of 45 questions using Likert-type scales was adapted from Johnson's (1982) study, "Perceptions of Factors Affecting the Relative Effectiveness of Temporary Blue Ribbon State Commissions." Johnson's study was chosen for its contribution in determining what particular elements in the composition and process of a Blue Ribbon Commission seemed to be related to its ultimate level of effectiveness. Specific questions addressed ten key characteristics of an effective Blue Ribbon Commission. The first eight characteristics were drawn from Johnson and Marcus (1986) and were placed under the following criteria headings: 1) Composition of Commission Membership; 2) Clarity of State Mandate; 3) Thoroughness of Commission Investigation; 4) Leadership of Commission Chair; 5) Commission Staff Expertise and Support; 6) Public Input Sought by Commission; 7) Comprehensiveness of Commission Final Report; and 8) Commission Advocacy of Recommendations. Two additional criteria were added to the list of characteristics developed by Johnson and Marcus. The first addressed the timeliness of the Commission's final report based on Folger and Berdahl's (1987) research. The second criterion, added by the researcher, focused on the usefulness of the recommendations to the State of California. The ten characteristics used in the study to describe an effective commission included:

1. **Composition of Commission Membership**

   The commission membership should be perceived as including eminent citizens who are reflective of a broad range of views and interests.

2. **Clarity of State Mandate**

   The charge to the commission should be perceived as being clear and comprehensive.

3. **Thoroughness of Commission Investigation**

   The commission should be perceived as holding enough meetings for its members to understand fully the issues at hand and the various solutions under consideration.

4. **Leadership of Commission Chair**

   The commission's chair should be perceived as providing strong leadership.

5. **Commission Staff Expertise and Support**

The commission's staff should be perceived as being knowledgeable and appropriate in number to provide the necessary background research.

6. **Public Input Sought by Commission**

The commission should be perceived as seeking public opinion concerning the various problems and solutions under study.

7. **Comprehensiveness of Commission Final Report**

The commission's report should be perceived to address the objectives set forth in the charge, provide adequate documentation of the problems, make recommendations that have a clear relationship to the problems, and that are readily understandable, and provide documentation concerning the recommendations.

8. **Commission Advocacy of Recommendations**

Members of the commission should be perceived as willing to advocate on behalf of their report once it is issued.

9. **Timeliness of Commission Final Report**

The timing of the release of the report should be perceived as appropriate for achieving maximum impact.

10. **Usefulness of Commission Recommendations to State**

The recommendations should be perceived as contributing toward satisfying the needs of California's increasingly diverse population in the next decade.

Three questions in the questionnaire required more extended answers. The first question requested respondents to give their views of the State Legislature's reasons for establishing the Commission for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. The second, requested respondents to list factors that would have enabled the Commission to have done its work more effectively. The third, gave the respondents an opportunity to provide additional comments on the overall effectiveness of the Commission's work, particularly in regard to the guidance from the State Legislature, the quality of work provided by the Commission and the Commission Executive Staff, and the quality of the contribution of outside experts. The purpose of these questions was to allow the questionnaire recipients to elaborate on perceptions which could be more adequately described in their own words.

The researcher received completed questionnaires from 44 key respondents (60%). This included fifteen of the seventeen Commissioners (88%). (See Table I).

TABLE I
KEY RESPONDENT GROUPS SURVEYED

Respondent Groups	Number in Group	Number Surveyed	Rec'd. Response	Rec'd. No Response
1. Commissioners	17	17	15	2
2. Commission Staff	9	4	4	0
3. C.E.O. Advisory Grp	12	12	10	2
4. Segmental Adv. Grp	9	9	7	2
5. Faculty Adv. Grp	10	10	7	3
6. Legislative Respond	20	20	2	18
Total	78	73	44	29
%	100	100	60	39

After the questionnaire responses were tabulated and summarized, the information was used as a basis for conducting interviews. Seventeen interviews were conducted with key representatives from the Commission (ten members were interviewed), the Commission Executive Staff (three members were interviewed), the C.E.O. and Faculty Advisory Groups (two members from the C.E.O. group and one member from the faculty group were interviewed), and the State Legislature (the originator of Senate Bill 1570, education consultant to the Senator who sponsored the bill, was interviewed). Interviews with Commissioners were sought based on whether: 1) the Commissioner held a leadership position, i.e., Commission Chair, Vice-Chair; 2) the Commissioner expressed viewpoints in disagreement with the Commission's final recommendations; 3) the Commissioner provided unique background (i.e., brought unique cultural, ethnic, or professional role to

the Commission). Interviews with the Commission Executive Staff were based on whether the member played a leadership role (i.e., the Executive Director). They were also based on whether the staff member had: 1) participated in the survey; 2) was readily accessible; and 3) had agreed to be interviewed.

The interviews enabled the researcher to probe key issues in depth. Emphasis was placed on questionnaire topics in which the respondent had expressed disagreement or had made a recommendation for change. The interviews also attempted to understand the process used by the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education and obtain observations regarding the immediate outcomes of the Commission's final recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 1570 (SB 1570), sponsored by California Senator Jim Nielsen, was passed on September 27,1984, creating the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education.[2] The proposed Master Plan Review of 1984-87 was distinguished from earlier reviews in California by a unique structure and agenda. The review was built upon three laws structured so that none could take effect unless all were signed by the Governor.[3]

The first bill, SB 1570, established the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. It was originally drafted with the intent of having a "non-partisan commission with no set agenda, no direct involvement by the higher education segments or the State Legislature, no executive director, and unlimited resources."[4] The originators of the bill thought it "necessary to get the review out of the State Legislature"5 because issues important to the future of higher education and the well-being of the State , in the opinions of some, were not effectively being resolved there. 6

To assure passage of the bill and make it "politically palatable,"[7] various compromises in the intent of the original bill were made. One compromise included an agreement to increase the number of members on the Commission to allow representation by the Governor, the State Legislature, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the four higher education segments (the University of California, the California State University, the California

Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities).8

In addition, the Commission was to have broad public input. The Commission's membership was to include "citizens knowledgeable in the area of postsecondary education, business, and community leaders representative of the cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the state".9 The bill prohibited "any person employed or retained by any public or private postsecondary education institution from serving on the commission..."10 No additional methods to screen candidates were requested. Over an approximate ten month period (from the time Senate Bill 1570 was passed in September, 1984 until August 1985) sixteen men and women were appointed to the Commission.11

Commission membership included five businessmen and one business woman, five lawyers, two persons working in the non-profit sector (one a prior higher education faculty member and dean), two secondary school teachers (one retired), and two government officials (the Superintendent of Public Instruction and his appointee both occupied the same position). (Note: A third government official also representing the Superintendent of Public Instruction, took part in the Community College study). The majority had backgrounds as trustees for a variety of educational institutions. Three Commissioners were members respectively of the University of California Board of Regents, the California State University Board of Trustees, and the California Community Colleges Board of Governors. Thirteen men and three women were represented on the Commission. The permanent Executive Director was hired in August 1985, five months after the Commission had begun operation.

Another compromise, was incorporated into a second bill, Assembly Concurrent Resolution 162, which established the California legislative Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education.12 This Committee was to work concurrently with the Commission and ultimately, take the Commission's final recommendations under advisement and make its own recommendations regarding the need for legislative action.[13] As one Commissioner explained:

> The way the legislative Joint Committee developed its strategy, the Commission would submit its report and the Committee would take it under advisement. The Committee didn't have to come to a compromise with the Commission. We (the Commission) had no reporting authority and bore no responsibility for supporting our recommendations or running with them.[14]

The last major compromise directed the Commission to "reassess" the Community Colleges first, before embarking on the review of Master Plan for Higher Education. This compromise was contained in Senate Bill 2064, sponsored by Senator Stiern.[15] As the entire process was set up, the Commission's "first and highest priority"was the study of the Community College system, and then the examination of the entire Master Plan.[16] At the conclusion of each phase, the Commission was to submit its findings and recommendations to the Joint Committee for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. The Joint Committee would take each Commission report under advisement while completing its own separate studies. In addition, the Joint Committee planned to hold hearings on each of its two final reports (the first, regarding the reassessment of the Community Colleges and the second regarding the Review of the Master Plan) before presenting its final recommendations to the State Legislature.[17]

The Legislative Mandate

Senate Bill 1570, establishing the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, specified that the "duties of the Commission... shall include, but not be limited to, the review of reports submitted by the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the University of California, the California State University, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst, or any other relevant reports, the conducting of public hearings, and the formulation and submission of recommendations regarding policies and the content of the master plan".18 The charge indicated the review was to be comprehensive, which partially satisfied the second criterion for an effective Commission regarding "Clarity of State Mandate" (i.e., the charge should be perceived as being clear and comprehensive). However, no specific request was made to review the contents of the Donahoe Higher Education Act regarding the function, mission, governance or coordination of the California State University or the University of California. The State Legislature left open to the interpretation of the Commission whether these areas should be changed. Therefore, a portion of the second criterion regarding the clarity of the State mandate was not met.

In addition, the general charge to the Commission focused on five areas of particular interest to the Joint Committee for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. These areas included:

(1) California's postsecondary educational needs through the year 2000, with emphasis on the demography of student, societal, and employment needs in the next decade versus the projected supply of postsecondary education faculty.

(2) Basic and lower division instruction at the various postsecondary institutions, with an initial emphasis on the mission and function of the California Community Colleges, as specified in Senate Bill 2064 of the 1983-84 Regular Session.

(3) Strategies to promote an increase in the access and success of students, particularly those underrepresented in postsecondary education, including adult education through graduate instruction, in the following areas:

   (A) Preparation and outreach: basic skills and college preparation in kindergarten through grade 12, and community college curriculum.

   (B) Matriculation: admission, assessment, and advisement.

   (C) Retention: remediation, academic support, and financial assistance.

   (D) Articulation: transition from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

   (E) Accountability: assurance that courses offered are consistent with the mission of various segments of postsecondary education.

(4) The appropriateness of existing education delivery systems and their ability to serve present and future student populations.

(5) Analysis of direct and indirect expenditures for students attending California postsecondary institutions, including student financial assistance and instructional support, as to the efficient use of state resources.[19]

In initial communication with the Commission, the legislative Joint Committee reaffirmed its concern that "lower-division instruction receive the deepest and most considered analysis throughout [the] deliberations," 20 and "the issues of access and success of under-represented minorities ... be a continuing central focus, ...not [to] be separated out from the issues of the quality of undergraduate instruction."21

FINDINGS

Reasons for Review

The Commissioners and key questionnaire respondents perceived five principal reasons prompting the California State Legislature to establish the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. In order of frequency, they listed: 1)

concern about the mission, function, finance, and apparent lack of accountability in the California Community Colleges; 2) the need for a new review of higher education ; 3) increased need for access to higher education by low-income and minority students;4) a need to look at financing higher education in today's economic environment, and; 5) changing State demographics.

The Commission

Table II shows the overwhelming majority of respondents (93%), strongly agreed or agreed that the use of the Commission, rather than another type of agency or structure, was the most appropriate means for addressing the postsecondary education policy issues. Information gained during interview suggested that the use of the commission was essential to remove discussion from the floor of the State Legislature. Two Commissioners disagreed with the use of the "lay" Commission preferring a task force of persons with more specialized knowledge in higher education.

TABLE II
USE OF COMMISSION

Question : In retrospect, the use of the Commission rather than another type of agency or structure (such as a task force or legislative sub-committee study) was the most appropriate means for addressing the issues.

Respondent Group	Response* SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$**	NO
Commissioners	9	3	2	0	1.50	0
Commission Staff	2	2	0	0	1.50	0
C.E.O. Advisory Group	3	4	0	0	1.57	1
Segmental Advisory Group	3	4	0	0	1.57	0
Faculty Advisory Group	2	5	0	0	1.71	0
Legislative Respondent	1	1	0	0	1.50	0
Total	20	19	2	0		1
%	48	45	5	0		2

n= 42

*Key: SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree
NO = No Opinion

**Note: On a scale of one to four, SA (Strongly Agree) = 1.

Table III represents a summary of the perceptions of the respondents regarding all questions pertaining to the Commission and its work. Although the overwhelming majority of respondents thought the Commission was a favorable means of addressing postsecondary policy issues, they were much less satisfied with the time it took to establish the Commission, the clarity of the Commission's objectives once it was established, and the length of time it took the Commission to complete its work. Over ninety percent of the respondents agreed that the number of times the Commission met was sufficient satisfying criterion three, "Thoroughness of Investigation". However, written comments suggested too many issues were discussed at each meeting making the ability to fully understand each issue and the policy options under consideration more difficult. (Note: During Commission deliberations, over sixty issues and two-hundred policy options were discussed.) The suggestion was made that the Commission should have continued to have subcommittees within the Commission structure. The Commission Executive Director indicated that the subcommittees were abandoned after his appointment to avoid overlapping discussion of the issues and to allow the Commission Staff to devote its time exclusively to the work assigned by the entire Commission. However, several Commissioners expressed the opinion that a process which would have allowed Commission members to explore selected issues in more depth would have been desirable.

TABLE III
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE COMMISSION

Question	Percent of Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
1. Use of Commission	48	45	5	0	1.56	2
2. Clarity of Objectives	12	63	21	2	2.13	2
3. Length of Time to Complete Work	23	57	18	0	1.94	2
4. Operations Began on Time*	7	38	31	5	2.41	19
5. Sufficient Funds	23	47	5	2	1.81	23
6. Sufficient Number of Meetings	32	59	7	0	1.74	2

n varies from 41 to 44 for questions 1-6

*scale was reversed

The Commissioners

Table IV is a summary of all questions relating to the Commissioners. Respondents perceived the Commission membership, on the whole, favorably. They felt that

Commissioner selection took adequate account of the major affected interests (i.e., higher education segments, governor, legislature), the means for appointment were adequate, there was not too much partisan political division, the Commissioner's were consistently accessible to the public, and that they paid adequate attention to their activities. They were less enamoured with the Commissioner's advocacy of specific interests and their qualifications to discuss postsecondary policy issues. The State legislative mandate had requested the composition of the Commission's membership be reflective of a broad range of views and interests (it did not request the members be eminent), partially satisfying the first criterion, "Composition of Commission Membership". Written comments suggested a need for more in-depth expertise on the Commission regarding the views of higher education faculty, the independent sector, and the Hispanic community. Over eighty percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the Commission Chair provided adequate leadership satisfying the fourth criterion regarding "Commission Leadership."

TABLE IV
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE COMMISSIONERS

Question	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
7. Selection Took Account of Major Affected Interests	27	57	14	2	1.91	0
8. Means for Appointment Adequate	16	50	11	2	1.98	21
9. Not Too Much Advocacy of Specific Interests*	21	35	28	7	2.23	9
10. Not Too Much Partisan Political Division*	21	56	14	0	1.92	9
11. Well-Qualified	10	51	27	7	2.21	5
12. Adequate Attention to Activities	29	50	7	0	1.74	14
13. Consistently Accessible	23	54	9	0	1.83	14
14. Chair's Leadership Adequate	30	52	9	5	1.88	5

n varies from 42 to 44 for questions 7-14

*scale was reversed

The Commission Staff

Table V summarizes the respondents' perceptions of the support and expertise given by the Commission Executive Staff. The respondents gave the Commission Staff high

marks for their consistent accessibility. They were less certain about the Staff's qualifications for its responsibilities or the choice of Staff based on merit. (It was noteworthy to learn during interviews that the choice of Commission Staff was based to some degree on "who happened to be available" and that this was "typical" of the way a Commission Staff was chosen under the legislative process.) A clear majority of the respondents perceived the Staff gave relevant and timely support throughout the Commission's deliberations. However, the respondents were clearly less satisfied with the background research provided by the Staff, and the number of Staff provided to do the Commission's work. In examining Commission publications, the researcher noted all of the background papers had been written by Commission Staff and nine of the sixteen issue papers containing background research had been written by Commission Staff. The findings suggest that the Staff was overworked and this could have been reflected in the quality of the background research provided for the Commission. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the criterion regarding "Staff Expertise and Support" (i.e., the commission's staff should be perceived as being knowledgeable and appropriate in number to provide the necessary background research.) was only partially satisfied. The respondents, on the whole, appeared to be satisfied with the Commission Executive Director's job in choosing and utilizing staff, his relations with Commissioners, and outside communications with the public, the press, and the state legislature.

TABLE V
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO COMMISSION STAFF

Question	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
15. Number of Staff Sufficient	5	59	27	2	2.27	7
16. Chosen on Basis of Merit	16	53	7	5	2.01	19
17. Well-Qualified for Responsibilities	20	54	16	5	2.06	5
18. Consistently Accessible	36	52	2	0	1.62	9
19. Background Research Conducted by Staff Sufficient	12	54	23	9	2.25	2
20. Relevant, Timely Support Provided	16	59	14	0	1.97	11
Executive Director Did Adequate Job:						
21. Choosing, Utilizing Staff	37	33	16	2	1.80	12
22. Relations with Commission members	34	36	5	7	1.81	18
23. External Relations - Public, Press, Legislature	29	50	7	7	1.91	7

n varies from 43 to 44 for questions 15-2

The External Environment

Table VI summarizes the respondents' perceptions of questions relating to the external environment affecting the effectiveness of the Commission's work. The respondents perceived the number of public hearings held by the Commission allowed ample opportunity for public comment . They also felt the Commission relied on public testimony to an appropriate degree during its discussions and deliberations thus satisfying the criterion regarding "Public Input". Although they judged the media's reaction to the Commission's work, on the whole, as favorable, they were much less enthusiastic about the Commission's use of the media to inform the public of the issues under discussion. A noticeable number of respondents felt the Commission could have used outside experts more effectively. The adequacy of the background and issue papers was also in question by close to one-third of the respondents. These findings suggest areas in which the effectiveness of a Commission's work could be enhanced. It is worth noting that over 40 percent of the respondents (including 58% of the Commissioners) did not find the involvement of the legislative Joint Committee helpful to the work of the Commission. This represented a key finding in the research. The Commissioners interviewed perceived the Joint Committee's existence downgraded the importance of the Commission's work by duplicating its function and confused the public as to whom to appropriately address their comments.

TABLE VI
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

QUESTION	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
24. Number of public hearings	22	64	9	0	1.86	5
25. Relied on public testimony	16	61	11	0	1.94	11
26. Adequately utilized media coverage	7	50	30	2	2.30	11
27. Media reaction favorable	9	70	9	0	2.00	11
28. Experts used effectively	5	57	23	5	2.31	11
29. Issue papers adequate	7	68	23	2	2.20	0
30. Background papers adequate	9	64	25	2	2.20	0
31. Involvement of Joint Committee helpful	2	33	28	16	2.73	21

n varies from 43 to 44 for questions 24-31

Commission Outcomes

Table VII summarizes respondent perceptions regarding the outcome of the Commission's work. The respondents, for the most part, were pleased with the writing and organization of the Commission's final report. They felt the report adequately substantiated the Commission's recommendations. They also perceived the needs of the major affected interests (e.g. higher education segments, governor, legislature, minority groups) were reflected in the recommendations. However, although the respondents seemed satisfied that the report's recommendations adequately addressed the stated objectives of the state legislature, one-third of the Commissioners did not. Written comments suggested the need for more recommendations which addressed strategies to improve the access and success of students, particularly underrepresented students, as called for by the state legislative mandate. Therefore, it was concluded that the criterion "Comprehensiveness of the Final Report" (concerning the ability of the final report to address the objectives set forth in the charge) was only partially satisfied. Among the respondents who expressed an opinion, a bare majority perceived the Commissioners were, on the whole, active in advocating the final recommendations satisfying the criterion "Commission Advocacy". During interview it was learned that the process mandating the Commission to turn their final recommendations over to the legislative Joint Committee for

TABLE VII
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO COMMISSION OUTCOMES

Question	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
33. Final report -- well-written and organized	23	61	16	0	1.93	0
34. Recommendations addressed legislative objectives	18	55	18	0	2.00	9
35. Report substantiated recommendations	18	61	18	2	2.04	0
36. Needs of major affected interests reflected in final recommendations	21	52	18	0	1.96	9
37. Commission advocacy	14	38	14	2	2.47	31
38. Publication of report timely	5	81	12	0	2.07	2

n varies from 42 to 44 for questions 33-38

review acted to moderate advocacy. Although a majority of the respondents perceived the publication of the Commission's final report was timely, one-third of the Commissioners did not. One Commissioner explained that timeliness was not a factor in the review process because of the length of time between the publication of the Commission's final report (July 1987) and action in the state legislature (August 1989). Therefore, "Timeliness of the Final Report" was considered a meaningful but unrealistic criterion for judging the effectiveness of this Commission's work.

Subsequent Effect

Table VIII is a summary of respondent perceptions related to questions concerning the subsequent effect of the Commission's work on postsecondary education. The respondents felt the Commission's recommendations would likely be useful to the state in addressing higher education issues, thus contributing toward satisfying the criterion "Usefulness of the Recommendations"(i.e., The recommendations should be perceived as contributing toward satisfying the needs of California's diverse population in the next decade). The Commission Chair noted, during interview, that issues regarding Hispanics

TABLE VIII
SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE SUBSEQUENT EFFECT OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

Question	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
39. Report Led to Changes in Policies and Procedures	16	34	32	5	2.29	11
40. Change Influenced to Considerable Degree by Commission's Work	12	48	30	8	2.34	2
41. Significant Change even Without Commission	2	52	36	10	2.54	0
42. Recommendations Very Useful to State	21	62	10	5	1.98	2

n varies from 40 to 42 for questions 39-42

in higher education would continue to be a focus for future discussion. Over a majority of the respondents believed change in California postsecondary education would likely be influenced to a considerable degree by the work and recommendations of the Commission. Over half of the Commissioners disagreed or strongly disagreed. Half of the respondents believed the Commission's report, even prior to the disposition by the Legislature, had led to important changes in policies and procedures in the State's postsecondary education institutions. Slightly over half of the respondents and half of the Commissioners also believed that significant changes in postsecondary education likely would have come about even if the Commission had not been established.

Summary Questions

A key finding of the research was that most Commissioners thought the final recommendations were not adequately bold. However, this was not true for the respondents, as a whole. Over a majority of the respondents believed the influence of the Commission on postsecondary education was very positive. A large majority of the respondents perceived the work of the Commission, on the whole, to be commendable given the time and resources available. (See Table IX)

TABLE IX
SUMMARY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO COMMISSION'S WORK

Question	Percent of Total Response SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	NO
43.Recommendations Adequately Bold	10	49	31	5	2.32	5
44.Commission's Work Commendable	37	54	7	2	1.74	0
45.Commission Influence Very Positive	23	47	14	7	2.05	9

n varies from 41 to 43 for questions 43-45

An additional summary question was open-ended and asked the respondents to list five principal factors that would have enabled the Commission to have done its work more effectively. In order of frequency listed, they included: 1) improvement in the process by

which the Commission worked; 2) improvement in the process by which the Commissioners were chosen; 3) more involvement by the Governor; 4) less involvement by the State Legislature; and 5) improvement in the process by which the Commission Staff was chosen.

CONCLUSIONS

Perceptions of Key Respondents Involved in the Master Plan Review

In conclusion, although the respondents affirmed the use of the Commission for the review, and perceived the choice of Commissioners and Commission Staff as adequate, they were less satisfied with certain elements in the external environment which affected the process of review including the work of the legislative Joint Committee. In addition, they were less satisfied with the subsequent effect the Commission's recommendations had on higher education immediately following the review. The Commissioners, in particular, felt the final recommendations could have been more bold.

Ten Key Characteristics Used to Describe an Effective Commission

The researcher concluded that the eight key characteristics described by Johnson and Marcus were good benchmarks for determining the effectiveness of the work of the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education in California. "Usefulness of [Commission] Recommendations" to the state also proved to be a helpful criterion to characterize an effective commission. However, "Timeliness of [the Commission's] Final Report" was not found to be a useful criterion in judging the effectiveness of this Commission because of the review process mandated by the State Legislature.

Outcome and Subsequent Effect of Commission Recommendations on Postsecondary Education

Legislation influenced by the Commission's earlier California Community College review was approved by the State Legislature in August 1988. The immediate effect of the Commission's final recommendations concerning California postsecondary education as a whole was difficult to determine because there was no formal means of documentation. In March 1989, almost two years after the release of the Commission's recommendations, the legislative Joint Committee for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education released its final recommendations regarding future postsecondary education policy. An

omnibus postsecondary education bill (Assembly Bill 462, Hayden) was introduced on June 6, 1989. As of August 1989 the State Legislature had not taken action on the bill.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE PROCESS OF REVIEW

The review of the California Master Plan for Higher Education is an extremely complex and important undertaking. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the work of a future commission, the following recommendations are given. They are thought to have some applicability for any blue ribbon citizen's commission charged with making policy recommendations pertaining to a complex political arena.

The State Legislative Mandate

Recommendation 1. The State Legislature's goals for the review of the Master Plan for Higher Education must be clear, first in regard to the structure under which the California higher education system operates (the Donahoe Higher Education Act) and second, in regard to the educational, economic, and social goals of importance to the State.

Recommendation 2. A plan must be devised for the next Master Plan Review whereby a commission and the State Legislature would not hold their reviews concurrently. In addition, the Legislative mandate should require a commission be made up of eminent citizens who reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the State, higher education experts representative of each of the four higher education segments, education experts representative of elementary and secondary education, and representatives of the Governor, State Legislature, and other appropriate government offices who are knowledgeable and can communicate the economic and social goals of the State. The intent would be to provide a more global perspective, eliminating unnecessary political competition.

The Reviewing Agency

Recommendation 3. Allow a commission to operate with more flexibility, not subject to the same requirements as a permanent State Agency. This would allow Commission Staff to be selected based on their expertise on the higher education issues to be reviewed and to allow more flexibility in the use of office support and services.

Recommendation 4. Assure a commission's objectives are manageable, clear and in keeping with the goals of the State mandate before embarking on education issue and policy discussion.

Recommendation 5. Organize a commission to include the support of research or technical committees which can provide background research information and policy options to the commission, particularly in regard to economic and social issues of interest to the State in which education plays a direct role.

The Commissioners

Recommendation 6. Develop a more formal mechanism for choosing commissioners based on professional, cultural, and ethnic diversity , near-equal gender representation, knowledge of elementary, secondary, and higher education, and the education goals of the State. This would act to ensure a global, knowledgeable, objective discussion of the issues before reaching recommendations for higher education and State action.

Preparation for Discussion and Analysis of Policy Options

Recommendation 7. Establish a formal, objective briefing program for educating commissioners as to the issues to be addressed and the positions taken by the higher education segments, the State Superintendent of Instruction, the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the State Department of Finance, the State Legislature, and the Governor.

Recommendation 8. Assure that commissioners have early and continual access to and use research information at the California Postsecondary Education Commission, particularly pertaining to the issue or issues in which they have/or have developed expertise in the course of the review.

Recommendation 9. Allow commission members to take ownership of their recommendations by becoming a member of one of the research or technical committees set up regarding a specific issue in which they have interest or expertise.

The Commission Staff

Recommendation 10. Assure that commission staff are chosen based on their experience in working on education policy issues pertinent to those being addressed by the Commission as well as their research and writing expertise.

Recommendation 11. Determine the number of commission staff to be chosen based on the amount and type of work expected to be completed, and the time frame given to complete it.

The Final Recommendations and Advocacy of the Recommendations

Recommendation 12. Provide financial incentives to the higher education segments to comply with recommendations which are thought to be essential to the success of future educational, economic, and social goals of the state.

Recommendation 13. Direct each recommendation to the higher education body (i.e., governing board, faculty, administrators) most able to affect it.

Recommendation 14. Plan a comprehensive method for advocating the recommendations to ensure public support, understanding, and action by the State legislature and the higher education community.

Evaluation of the Process of Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education

Recommendation 15. Provide an immediate opportunity for eminent citizens, higher education and government officials to review the strengths and limitations of the previous review and devise an improved formula for the next State review.

Evaluation of the Outcome of the Commission's Review

Recommendation 16. Devise a method whereby the activities attributed to a commission's final recommendations can be reported (or documented) in order to determine the impact of the recommendations and ultimately the effectiveness of a commission's work.

FOOTNOTES

1 Dumke, Glenn, (May 10, 1986) "State's Master Plan for Higher Education", Los Angeles Times.

2 Senate Bill 1570, Chapter 1507, California Statues and Amendments to the Codes (1984) 1983-84 Regular Session, 1983-84 Second Extra Session, Vol. 3, 1984 Chapters 1270-1760, pp. 5326-5328.

3 Senate Bill 1570 states, "This bill would specify that these provisions shall not become operative unless ACR 162 and SB 2064 of the 1983-84 Regular Session are both chaptered." p. 2.

4 Information obtained in interview with Education Consultant to California Senator Jim Nielsen (July, 1988).

5 Ibid.

6 Articles proliferated in the newspaper (See "Junior College Enrollment in L.A. Surges a Surprising 11%", Los Angeles Times, October 2, 1986) about the financing problems faced by educational institutions, being debated in the State Legislature, in the wake of the passage of Proposition 13. (See effects of Proposition 13 in "An Overview of Postsecondary Education in California", Legislative Analyst's Office, February 28, 1985. pp. 9-12.)

7 Information obtained in interview with Education Consultant to California Senator Jim Nielsen (July, 1988).

8 The first draft of the bill called for thirteen Commissioners. The final bill added three Commissioners for a total of sixteen. Actually, there were seventeen Commissioners. The State Superintendent was granted one representative, in addition to himself. The bill requested the Governor to appoint four representatives to the Commission (one more than each House of the State Legislature), the State Legislature to appoint six representatives (three appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and three appointed by the Senate Rules Committee), and the Superintendent of Instruction to represent himself or appoint a designee. Each of the four higher education segments were requested to appoint one representative by their governance or representative bodies. The California Postsecondary Education Commission also was requested to appoint a representative.

9 Senate Bill 1570,Section 1, reads, "There is hereby established the Commission for the review of the Master Plan for Higher Education to be comprised of 16 members who shall be citizens knowledgeable in the area of postsecondary education, business, and community leaders representative of the cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the state."

10 Senate Bill 1570, op. cit.

11 The State Superintendent was granted two representatives one for the initial Community Colleges study and a second for the Master Plan review making the total number of Commissioners seventeen.

12 Assembly Concurrent Resolution 162, Chapter 175, California Statues and Amendments to the Codes (1984) 1983-84 Regular Session, 1983-84 Second Extra Session, Vol. 3, 1984 Chapters 1270-1760, Resolution Chapters 1270-1760, pp. 6611-6612. Note: Assembly Concurrent Resolution 162 created the Joint Committee for Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education. It is important to note that the Donahoe Higher Education Act, Chapter 2, Section 66012, currently reads, "A legislative study of California postsecondary education at 10-year intervals to reevaluate the planning process and provide guidelines regarding goals, societal needs and general missions of public higher education and its components," is to replace the fixed master plan approach in the development of State public postsecondary education.

13 Senate Bill 1570 states, "...the commission shall, at a minimum, report on all of the following to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Review of the Master Plan established pursuant to Assembly Concurrent Resolution 162 of the 1983-84 Regular Session."

14 Interview with Commission Member, October 26, 1988.

15 Senate Bill 2064, Chapter 1506, California Statues and Amendments to the Codes (1984) 1983-84 Regular Session, 1983-84 Second Extra Session, Vol. 3, 1984 Chapters 1270-1760, pp. 5324-5325.

16 William Zumeta and Priscilla Wohlstetter, (1986) "Higher Education at the Crossroads," California Policy Choices: Volume Three, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, School of Public Administration, Sacramento, California, p. 137-138.

17 Ibid., p. 162.

18 Senate Bill 1570 (Note: Later in the bill, Section 1, the Commission was asked to "formulate and submit recommendations regarding the policies and content of the master plan, in addition to recommendations regarding the goals, programs, functions, funding, and interrelationships of the Master Plan for Higher Education.)

19 Senate Bill 1570, op. cit.

20 Letter to Commission from Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, Chair, legislative Joint Committee, dated August 29, 1985.

21 Ibid. (Note: "Not to be separated out" was explained in the following way: "...we [Joint Committee for Review of Master Plan for Higher Education] believe that an examination of the access and success of under-represented minorities must be linked to an exploration of what happens to and for such students while in the institutions of higher education....")

22 Interview with Commissioner, October 14 & 16, 1988.

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